

VZCZCXRO6217
RR RUEHAG RUEHDF RUEHLZ
DE RUEHRL #1381/01 3061343
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 021343Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5650
INFO RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUCNFRG/FRG COLLECTIVE
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 1694
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0406
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0924
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 2434
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1449
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 0626
RHMFIUU/HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE//J5 DIRECTORATE (MC)//
RHMFISS/CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE
RUKAAKC/UDITDUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BERLIN 001381

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/PAPD, EUR/PPA, EUR/CE, INR/EUC, INR/P,
SECDEF FOR USDP/ISA/DSAA, DIA FOR DC-4A

VIENNA FOR CSBM, CSCE, PAA

"PERISHABLE INFORMATION -- DO NOT SERVICE"

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [KGHG](#) [GM](#) [US](#) [AF](#) [XF](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: GERMAN CHANCELLOR IN THE US, CLIMATE,
MIDEAST, AFGHANISTAN ELECTIONS;BERLIN

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary
- [1](#)2. US-Germany/Climate
- [1](#)3. Afghan Presidential Elections
- [1](#)4. Secretary Clinton in the Mideast

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories

Primetime evening newscasts and many newspapers led with stories on Afghan presidential candidate Abdullah's decision not to participate in the runoff elections. Several newspapers opened with the German debate over a tax reform. Editorials focused on Afghanistan, tax cuts and healthcare issues.

- [1](#)2. US-Germany/Climate Protection

Tagesspiegel remarked in an editorial: "A rule of smart foreign policy says that you should not ask too much from your allies. You achieve little if the partner can't meet the request, but it is a burden for the work climate. No politician likes to be made a fool of. On Tuesday, Merkel will address the Congress, which is an honor only one chancellor had before: Konrad Adenauer in May 1957. In her weekly podcast, Merkel raised the expectation among Germans that she would make climate protection the top priority of her speech and push the U.S. to make substantial commitments at the climate conference in Copenhagen. However, Merkel is a smart woman. She knows the rules and will follow them. She will not be a lecturer. U.S. politicians are also not repeatedly demanding that Germany deploy more soldiers to Afghanistan. They would like to see this, but they also know that their desire would not be fulfilled. So why should we ask for the impossible? Merkel understands that the Congress will not pass a climate protection bill before Copenhagen and that President Obama-if he attends-cannot sign binding commitments on reducing greenhouse gases that would not be supported by the Congress. Merkel will rather deliver a speech praising U.S.-German relations and, prior to the 20th anniversary of the fall of the wall, will express gratitude to the

U.S. for having been the only western ally that unqualifiedly supported German unity.... So why was the message of her podcast different? It was a message for her audience at home where she is defending her reputation as climate chancellor."

Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung editorialized: "For over 50 years, no German chancellor enjoyed the honor of addressing the U.S. Congress. The expectations of what Merkel will say tomorrow, and the way she will say it, are enormous. The host can assume that Merkel will acknowledge the U.S. contribution to German unity from her specifically East German point of view. The global community has something else in mind. Given the small number of good European leaders-Berlusconi has become a megalomaniac, Brown is insignificant, and Sarkozy repeatedly promises more than he can deliver-all hopes are pinned on Merkel. A few weeks prior to the climate summit in Copenhagen, the community of greenhouse gas reducers is searching for ways to strengthen Barack Obama's position. He really wants to make ambitious steps towards climate protection, and Merkel's audience, the Congress, is acting as a brake. If the Chancellor can end this blockade, her second term would begin with a triumph. However, this will require a great speech."

Regional Schwaebische Zeitung remarked: "Merkel should use the opportunity of addressing both houses of the Congress to deliver a great speech as an ambitious basis for daily business. The chancellor should tell U.S. politicians her own story and encourage them to support global cooperation. Obama stands behind her."

BERLIN 00001381 002 OF 003

13. Afghan Presidential Elections

Under the headline "A joke of an election," Sueddeutsche commented: "Many Afghans believed that they had a presidential election without any choice concerning the question of who should run the country over the next five years.... The worst fears of voters have not just become reality but were exceeded: As Abdullah boycotts the elections, the people can choose exactly one person-President Karzai. The election in Afghanistan has turned from a difficult vote into a fiasco. The public now see the third act of a sad play.... Eight years after the ousting of the Taliban, the people now have an election without any choice. This is a bitter result for a country that urgently needs a success."

Frankfurter Rundschau opined: "The plan to build a new state has proven to be useless for Afghanistan. It was not the right one for what the country was and for what international experts wanted it to become. Abdullah's decision to quit is undermining the reputation of the war in Afghanistan being a just cause, which some people still believed. The debate in Germany over the question of why Germans are still participating in the mission is overdue."

Berliner Zeitung noted: "Up to 100,000 foreign soldiers and thousands of Afghan police forces are now supposed to risk their lives for a runoff election that offers no choice. It could not be more absurd. The radical Taliban militias are right to laugh their heads off."

Frankfurter Allgemeine remarked in a front-page editorial: "President Karzai, who did not enjoy a good reputation before the elections, has further lost authority. His country is politically paralyzed. It now looks as if Karzai is finally undermined... The reputation of the international community, which described fair presidential elections as an important step to stabilize Afghanistan, has also suffered. However, the UN soon realized that the elections were neither fair nor democratic but broadly manipulated. The hope was that the runoff elections could repair the damage and reestablish respect. Abdullah's decision to quit the runoff destroyed these plans."

14. Secretary Clinton in the Mideast

Under the headline "A new try with an old recipe," Sueddeutsche

editorialized: "Hillary Clinton has taken her time to visit Israel. Mideast visions were the President's matter and Mideast envoy Mitchell took care of the daily business. The Secretary of State now landed in Jerusalem-pretty roughly on the bottom of the ladder. It was her job to communicate that America's new try would be with an old recipe. The U.S., which so far still tried to make clear that it would powerfully engage in the deadlocked peace process, has now become a petitioner again who wants to convince both sides of the beauty new peace negotiations would have. This is based on a painful pragmatic understanding: Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu feels strong enough to simply ignore the pressure and Palestinian President Abbas is so weak that any more pressure on him would strengthen radical forces. What does America do.....? It leaves the Mideast negotiations to its own devices. This became clear in the settlement question. The Secretary quashed President Obama's demand of a settlement freeze."

Under the headline "The U.S. ignores the Palestinian interests," Berliner Zeitung analyzed: "The U.S. government under Barack Obama wanted to revive the Mideast peace process as quickly as possible and force a compromise. Still last month, Obama announced that the U.S. would double its engagement. However, a short statement of

BERLIN 00001381 003 OF 003

U.S. Secretary Clinton during her stopover in Israel made clear that no U.S. President has failed with his peace efforts so quickly and dramatically. Clinton explained that a settlement freeze is no longer a precondition for the U.S. to start peace negotiations because Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is already making important concessions.... You could not tell Palestinians more rudely that their opinions, desires and fears don't matter.... This is not a change of strategy by the U.S. but the beginning of a farce.... Negotiations matter, not the goal. And if the Palestinians reject this, the Israeli government representatives can say again that the Palestinians are the problem."

DELAWIE